

State Representative Jim Bottorff

Helping Hoosier Families

113th Indiana General Assembly, Spring 2004

Session Report



Fighting
Abuses



Protecting
Children



Job
Creation





113th General Assembly Ends

Dear Friends,

The 2004 short session of the Indiana General Assembly has ended. I have detailed several important pieces of legislation in this newsletter, including job creation, children's safety issues and increased access to affordable prescription drugs.

I hope you find this information useful, and I will keep you updated over the next few months on other legislation that should have a positive impact on you and your family. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns about state government.

Sincerely,



Fighting Drug, Alcohol Abuses

Lawmakers spent a lot of time this session trying to come up with real solutions to the problems brought on by the abuse of drugs and alcohol throughout Indiana. Among the most prominent concerns was the new wave of production and use of methamphetamine sweeping through the state. Criminals favor this drug because of its low cost, simple manufacture and easy accessibility. Another major problem the legislators resolved to face was the occurrence of drunk driving on Hoosier roadways.

House Bill 1136 creates a task force to combat the production, distribution and use of methamphetamine in Indiana. The task force will suggest specific actions to lessen the demand and decrease the supply of meth, improve the enforcement of meth laws, and evaluate the success of programs in other states to make recommendations for improving local, state and federal laws regarding meth in Indiana.

House Bill 1264 is aimed at keeping drunk drivers off the road. It requires an ignition interlock system, which works by screening a driver's breath in order to start the vehicle, be installed in a repeat offender's vehicle.

The system will detect if a driver attempts to start the vehicle by circumventing the breath test. The car horn will activate and continue to sound until the vehicle is shut off. The system will then lock the auto down for a predetermined period of time.

House Bill 1394 charges anyone 21 years of age or older with a Class B felony for causing the death of another person while operating a vehicle under the influence of drugs or alcohol. In addition, anyone who operates a vehicle under the influence, and with at least one passenger under the age of 18, will be charged with a Class D felony. Anyone with two convictions of causing death while intoxicated and operating a vehicle will have their license suspended for life. This legislation honors the memory of State Rep. Roland Stine, and helps to prevent tragic accidents caused by intoxicated drivers.

In January our efforts resumed to give tax relief to the people who needed it the most.

Legislation I Passed through the General Assembly

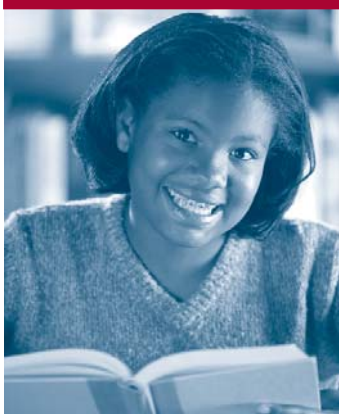
There were three pieces of legislation which I authored this past session of which I am very proud.

House Bill 1277 defines certain provision in wetland regulations and adds specific definitions such as "dredged material" and "ponds." It also provides that certain wetland activities shall be authorized by a general permit rule. This bill is a true economic development piece of legislation.

House Bill 1300 requires facilities to file periodic reports with the court concerning a committed individual who was found not responsible for a crime by reason of insanity and is committed to a mental health facility, and to notify the court and certain individuals as soon as practical if the committed individual escapes, and at least 10 days before the committed individual is transferred, discharged or allowed outside the facility without supervision.

House Bill 1301 converts the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commission to a permanent commission and allows for easier issue of Lewis and Clark recognition license plates, since those persons wanting this plate will not be required to petition the Clark Floyd Tourism Bureau for a plate application.

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Protecting Children

Legislators Address Safety Issues

During the 2004 session, several bills were passed to help the safety of children. Legislators passed bills to protect children from abuse and neglect, and keep them safe in automobiles.

• **House Bill 1194** will provide tools to protect children from abuse or neglect. Criminal history checks will be required for each person who resides in a home in which a child is to be placed before the child is placed there. Child Protective Services (CPS) reports may now conclude if abuse or neglect is "indicated," as well as "substantiated" or "unsubstantiated." There will be an additional public disclosure in cases where a child dies as a result of abuse or neglect. A statewide group will be created under the bill to investigate the sudden and/or unexpected deaths of children.

• **House Bill 1245** will levy tougher penalties against people who neglect a child who ends up dying as a result of the crime. The bill will increase the penalty for neglect of a dependent to a

Class A Felony if the neglect results in the death of a child. Penalties will be increased for contributing to the delinquency of a minor if a person 21 years or older provides alcohol or a controlled substance to a minor, and the consumption of that alcohol or drug is determined to cause a death of any person.

• **Senate Bill 194** will provide added protections for all children in a home where abuses have taken place.

• **House Bill 1098** will require anyone who operates a motor vehicle with a passenger who is less than 8 years of age to place the child in a restraint system. Passengers between 8 and 16 years old will be required to wear a seat belt. Studies have indicated that child restraint systems can help prevent injuries caused when children do not properly fit in a safety belt.

In addition, the bill will create a Child Restraints System Account that will make grants to private and public organizations to purchase and distribute child restraint systems such as booster seats at minimal or no charge.



Medication Savings

Hoosiers Gain Access to Affordable Prescription Drugs

Legislators also worked hard to protect Hoosiers from the rising costs of prescription drugs. Under a plan approved this session, more than **400,000 Hoosiers would gain access to affordable prescription drugs**, with many more qualifying in years to come.

House Bill 1265 enables the state to set up an aggregate prescription drug purchasing program to negotiate the prices of prescription drugs from phar-

maceutical companies. **Indiana will also be able to enter into joint purchasing agreements with other states, gaining added bargaining power.**

People who sign up for the program will get a prescription drug card to receive the savings when they fill their prescriptions at their local drugstores. This program will simplify the lives of many and improve the conditions for people on fixed and limited incomes.



Helping Hoosier Families



Representative Jim Bottorff
discusses legislation
on the House floor.

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Creating Hoosier Jobs

Protecting and creating Hoosier jobs and businesses were among the issues of most concern in the 2004 General Assembly.

House Resolution 47 calls on the president and Congress to address a growing trade imbalance that has resulted in the loss of more than 2 million manufacturing jobs in the U.S. since 2001. It asks that **trade agreements require that corporations pay fair and competitive wages**, respect the rights of workers to unionize, and adopt workplace safety and anti-pollution standards equal to those in our country. The resolution also encourages the federal government to **provide economic incentives to sectors that have seen record job losses** due to NAFTA.

House Bill 1080 will help **stimulate Indiana's economy** by providing a price preference to Indiana businesses for public works and procurement contracts.

House Bill 1434 **will benefit low-income businesses by fostering economic development opportunities** by providing grants for training and technical assistance. The microenterprise partnership program created under the bill will provide assistance to businesses with fewer than five employees.

House Bill 1365 will make the state's research and development tax credit permanent, extend the life of the Hoosier Business Investment Tax Credit and create a new fund to encourage investment in new technology. It also calls for a study of **eliminating corporate tax loopholes in current Indiana law** that cause tax increases on Hoosier homeowners and businesses.

Marriage in Indiana and Senate Joint Resolution 7

Several of you contacted me about Senate Joint Resolution 7, which would have amended the Indiana Constitution to only allow marriage between a man and a woman. While I am in support of this resolution, the procedural rules of the General Assembly are that legislation and resolutions must pass through committee. The Rules Chairman held SJR 7.

In addition, Indiana already prohibits same-sex marriages. In 1997, the General Assembly passed Public Law 1, which specifies that only a female may marry a male and only a male may marry a female. That same year, the General Assembly approved Public Law 198, which specifies that a marriage between persons of the same gender is void in Indiana, even if the marriage is lawful in the place where it was performed. I supported both of these pieces of legislation.

Rep. Jim Bottorff

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